

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT DIVISION



TRAVEL TIDBITS

“ONE APHIS - - SHARING INFORMATION”

JULY 2003

This is the third issuance of “Travel Tidbits” for 2003. Travel Tidbits are designed to provide Agency personnel with the current policies and procedures relating to federal travel and transportation practices. Travel Tidbits will be emailed to program travel contacts on a monthly basis and they are also available online at www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/travel.html. The information provided is obtained from General Services Administration’s (GSA) Board of Contract Appeals (BCA) Decisions, Comptroller General (CG) Decisions, Departmental and Agency policy, as well as, the Federal Travel Regulations (FTR). This publication is to be used as a tool to assist with the interpretation of travel regulations and to provide instructions of travel processes.

I. DETERMINING WHICH AIRPORT TO USE WHEN THERE ARE MULTIPLE AIRPORTS SERVING YOUR AREA

APHIS’ current policy is to allow the employee the option of using the most conveniently located airport within a 35-mile radius of the departure point (home or office), when the difference in cost of using a round-trip airfare at an alternate airport is less than \$300.

II. USE OF PREMIUM- CLASS OTHER THAN FIRST-CLASS ACCOMMODATIONS

a. USING FREQUENT TRAVELER BENEFITS TO UPGRADE CLASS TO PREMIUM SERVICE

As frequent traveler benefits may now be retained for personal use, you may use any frequent traveler benefits you have earned to upgrade your transportation class to premium service. No approval is necessary for this upgrade. See APHIS Notice – MRP 02-3 dated June 7, 2002 for the complete APHIS policy.

b. MEDICAL ACCOMMODATIONS

Requests to upgrade to premium class service for medical accommodations must be submitted in writing to the MRP Under Secretary and substantiated by a request from the employee's physician. The written request to the Under Secretary and a form AD-202 for the Administrator's approval must be submitted to the Travel Services Center for obtaining the required approvals in advance .

c. IN-AIR FLIGHT TIME IN EXCESS OF 14 HOURS

In certain circumstances, where the origin and/or destination is Outside the Continental United States (OCONUS) and the scheduled flight time is in excess of 14 hours, travelers may request the approval of premium class service. These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis, for example; it may be more cost advantageous to the agency to authorize a flight with a rest stop or allow the traveler to leave a day early or return a day later rather than authorize premium class service. When premium class service is approved for the outbound departure, the return trip is not automatically approved, it will be subject to the same criteria as the outbound request. However, in certain instances where premium class is authorized, the traveler is not eligible for a rest stop en route or a rest period upon arrival at the destination.

When requesting an upgrade due to the circumstances mentioned above, a Form AD-202 for the approval of the Administrator and a written request to the MRP Under Secretary which gives answers to the following questions must be provided to the Travel Services Center in advance, for the consideration of approval:

- What is the origin, destination, and expected in-air flight time?

- Is a General Services' Administration (GSA) contract or any other Government fare available for all or part of the flight? If available, what is the cost of the airfare? If a GSA contract or other Government fare is not available, what is the cost of the roundtrip coach fare?
- What is the additional cost to the Agency to upgrade your transportation class to premium service?

Send the AD-202 and written request to the Travel Services Center (address and fax number listed on page 3 of this document) to obtain the Administrator's approval.

REPORTING USE OF PREMIUM-CLASS ACCOMMODATIONS

Agencies are required to submit semi-annual reports to the Director, Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO). The reports should consist of a summary for each trip when premium-class accommodations were used for all or part of the trip. However; if Frequent Travelers Benefits were used to offset the additional cost, no summary is necessary. Each Unit/Division will be notified by the Travel Services Center of the 1st and 3rd quarter due dates for the reports.

301-3 MRP Supplements to ATR, 301-10.124, FTR

III. AUTHORIZING A REST STOP WHILE IN TRAVEL STATUS

You may be authorized a rest period not in excess of 24 hours at either an intermediate point or at your destination when:

1. Either your origin or destination point is OCONUS;
2. Your scheduled flight time, including stopovers, exceed 14 hours;
3. Travel is by a direct or usually traveled route; and
4. Travel is by less than premium-class service.

When a rest stop is authorized the applicable per diem rate is the rate for the rest stop location. 301-11.20, FTR..

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